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ABSTRACT

This survey was designed to provide specific information about the number of states that are involved in adopting statewide performance based education (PBE) standards for "basic" or "life" skills, the scope of PBE activities, and the states' perceived needs for further research information to assist in planning and implementing programs. Highlights of the results include: (1) in August 1976, 29 states were planning or operating PBE programs for basic skills that reach approximately two-thirds of our nation's public elementary and secondary school students; (2) 24 states were also planning or operating PBE programs for the "life" skills needed for everyday tasks; (3) five states (enrolling about one-fourth of our nation's public school pupils) had PBE programs in operation; (4) development of PBE programs is related to the size of the public school enrollment in a state; (5) the PBE programs (planned or operational) cover a wide range of program aspects; (6) the two items most often included in PBE programs were multiple opportunities to pass a required test of competence and new or revised programs or courses; and (7) most states expressed a strong need for further research for all but a few of specified program items. (A sample survey is appended). (MH)

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ED137280

# Statewide Developments in Performance-Based Education

## A Survey of State Education Agencies 1976

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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FRSS Report #1

National Center for Education Statistics

*Fast Response Survey System*

SP010 921

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## HIGHLIGHTS

### •Extent of Statewide PBE Activities

#### Basic Skills

In August 1976, 29 States were planning or operating performance-based education (PBE) programs for the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. About two-thirds of our Nation's public elementary and secondary school students attend school in these States.

#### Life Skills

Twenty-four of these States were also planning or operating PBE programs for the "life," or functional, skills needed for everyday tasks.

#### Operational Programs

Five States, enrolling about a fourth of our Nation's public school pupils, currently have PBE programs in operation.

#### By Size of State Enrollment

Development of PBE programs was related to the size of public school enrollment in a State. Eighty percent, or 12 of the 15 States with enrollments of 1 million or more, had PBE plans or programs. In contrast, only 47 percent, or 17 of the 36 remaining States, reported Statewide PBE activity.

### •Characteristics of PBE Plans and Programs

#### Comprehensiveness

The PBE programs (planned or operational) cover a wide range of program aspects. Of the 11 program aspects specified in the survey, 6 were included in 20 or more State programs.

#### Most Frequently Included Aspects

The two items included most often were:

Multiple opportunities to pass a required test of competence

New or revised programs or courses.

### •Need for Further Research Information

Most States expressed a strong need for further research for all but a few of the specified program items. States currently engaged in PBE activity, planned or operational, generally expressed more urgent needs than did those States with no plans.

NCES 76-413

# Statewide Developments in Performance-Based Education

## A Survey of State Education Agencies, 1976

### Report No. 1 of the NCES Fast Response Survey System

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Tom Tomlinson...National Institute of Education

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE**
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**National Center for Education Statistics**
Marie D. Eldridge, *Administrator*

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

"The purpose of the Center shall be to collect and disseminate statistics and other data related to education in the United States and in other nations. The Center shall . . . collect, collate, and, from time to time, report full and complete statistics on the conditions of education in the United States; conduct and publish reports on specialized analyses of the meaning and significance of such statistics; . . . and review and report on education activities in foreign countries."--Section 406(b) of the General Education Provisions Act, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1221e-1).

Prepared for the National Center for Education Statistics
By Westat, Inc. under
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## FORWORD

This report is based on a survey that was the first to be conducted through the newly established Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The objective of the FRSS is to focus on timely topics for which quick national estimates are needed for planning and policy purposes. This survey was undertaken at the request of the National Institute of Education (NIE) to obtain current data on Statewide developments in performance-based education.

Supervision of the FRSS activities, the system, and the survey are the responsibility of Jeanette Goor, Project Officer, NCES. Westat, Inc., under the direction of Anita Schroeder, developed the system and conducted the survey under contract with NCES.

Tom Tomlinson of NIE provided the survey questions required by his organization. Numerous individuals in NCES assisted in the review and preparation of the questionnaire, including Jean Brandes, Robert North, and Joseph Cook. Consultations with Jack Conway, State Liaison Representative at NCES, kept the staff attuned to the States' views. During the planning, liaison was maintained with the Data Acquisition Subcommittee (through its Fast Response Panel) of the Committee on Evaluation and Information Systems (CEIS) of the Council of Chief State School Officers. The State Education Agency coordinators supported the survey by responding quickly and thoughtfully. Assistance of these individuals and others in their agencies is gratefully acknowledged.

It is hoped that the findings of this national survey of developments in performance-based education will be valuable to persons who are concerned with this current topic.

Marie D. Eldridge

Marie D. Eldridge, Administrator
National Center for Education Statistics

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# INTRODUCTION

Extensive pressure for educational accountability has been exerted by public and special interest groups during recent years. One of the significant consequences has been a move toward the development of performance-based standards of educational attainment (sometimes called "competency-based" or "performance-based" education). The intent of this movement is to provide an educational program that enables all pupils to master, at a minimum, certain fundamental skills at a specified level of attainment. Two groups of skills have received special attention: "basic" or "cognitive" and "life." The former involves the "three R's," and the latter refers to capabilities needed to perform daily life tasks, such as keeping a checkbook, shopping wisely, and filling out job applications or other forms.

Through professional and public news sources, it had become apparent that some States had begun to develop and implement programs based on the performance-based education (PBE) concept. It had also become apparent that the success of these programs hinged on the development of appropriate standards, criteria, and methods. This survey was designed to provide specific information about the number of States that are involved in adopting Statewide PBE standards for "basic" or "life" skills, the scope of the PBE activities, and the States' perceived needs for further research information to assist in planning and implementing PBE programs.

## SURVEY FINDINGS

This August 1976 survey of SEA's received responses from FRSS coordinators in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. Since this was a complete canvass and not a sample survey, the results are not weighted; the responses were simply aggregated to provide a national total. Details are shown and discussed in the following pages and, for convenience, national totals have been entered on the survey questionnaire, reproduced in appendix II.

The survey results show that some type of performance-based educational (PBE) activities were occuring in 29 States (actually 28 States and the District of Columbia; but, for convenience they are referred to as 29 States throughout this report). These activities include planning, developmental, and operational stages. The results in table 1 show that 24 of these States had PBE activities in both the basic and life skills, and 5 additional States had PBE activities only in the basic skills area. A total of 22 States had no plans for PBE activities in either area.

Most of the States reporting PBE activities were in the planning stage (23 for basic and 18 for life skills).

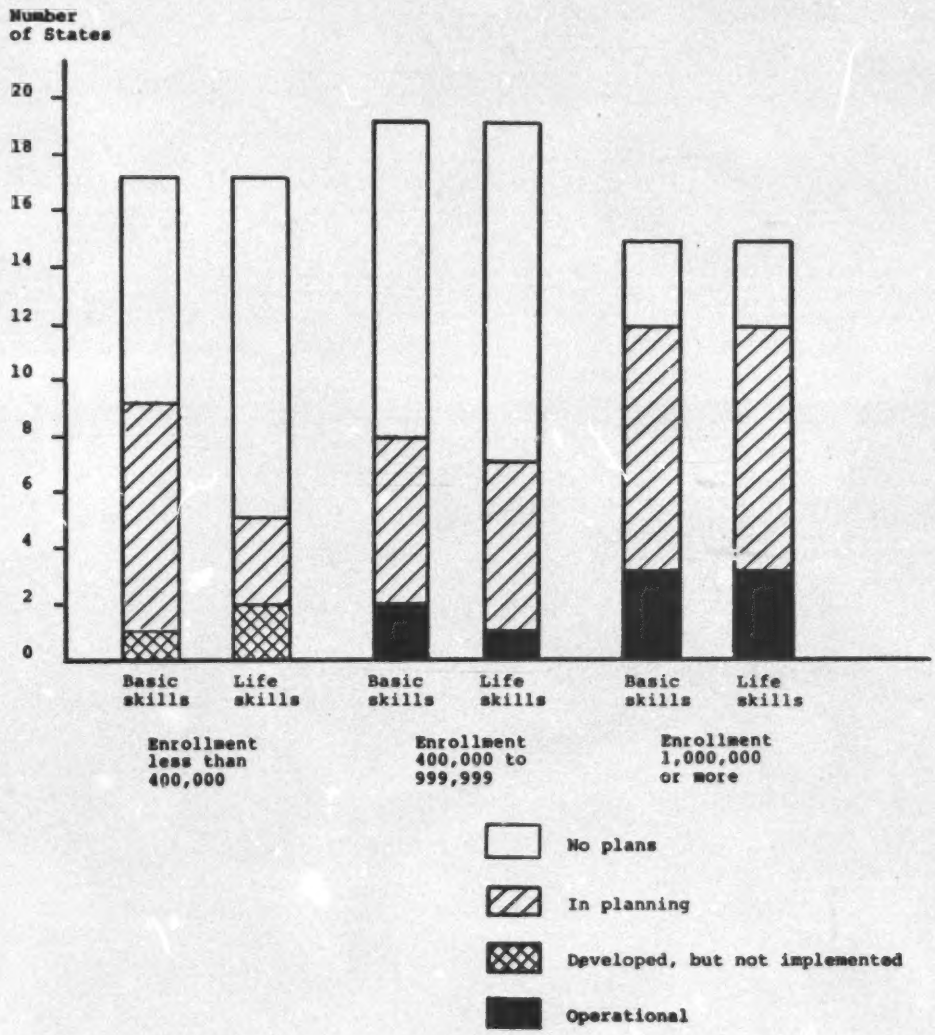
Five States had operational programs -- four for both basic and life skills, and one for basic skills only.

Table 1.--Performance-based education (PBE) in the basic skills and life skills: 50 States and District of Columbia, August 1976

| PBE activity status | States and D.C. | |
|---|---|---|
| | Number | Percent |
| Total | 51 | 100 |
| With PBE activities | 29 | 57 |
| In basic skills only | 5 | 10 |
| In life skills only | 0 | 0 |
| In both basic and life skills | 24 | 47 |
| With no PBE activities | 22 | 43 |

For a better understanding of the distribution of these activities, consider the response by student population in the States. Chart 1 shows the reported status of PBE activities for three public school enrollment ranges: less than 400,000; 400,000 to 999,999; and 1 million or more. Note that States with smaller enrollments (less than 400,000) show more planning being done in the basic skills than in the life skills. The other States show little preference for one area over the other. Moreover, no State in the less-than-400,000 range had a PBE program in operation. The chart also illustrates the substantially greater interest in both basic and life skills programs among the States with a million or more enrollment than among the less populous States.

Chart 1.--Status of programs in performance-based education (PBE), by level of public school enrollment: 50 States and District of Columbia, August 1976



Performance-based educational activities of some type, regardless of the enrollment sizes of the individual States, were occurring in 29 States with a total combined student population of over 31 million. This figure represents about 67 percent of the total public school enrollment in the United States. (See appendix I for the source and an explanation of the population figures used.) Performance-based life skills activities were being conducted in 24 States with a combined student population of nearly 30 million, or 64 percent of the U.S. total.

PBE programs in the basic skills were operational in five States: Arizona, California, New York, Oregon, and Texas. These States include approximately one-fourth of the total student population in the United States. Programs in four of these States also involve life skill standards.

Table 2.--Student population and status of performance-based education (PBE) in the basic skills and life skills: 50 States and District of Columbia, August 1976

| Current status of program | Basic skills | | Life skills | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of students (thousands) | Percent | No. of students (thousands) | Percent |
| Total | 46,468 | 100.0 | 46,468 | 100.0 |
| In planning | 19,144 | 41.2 | 18,275 | 39.3 |
| Developed but not implemented | 311 | 0.7 | 455 | 1.0 |
| Operational | 11,723 | 25.2 | 11,211 | 24.1 |
| No plans | 15,290 | 32.9 | 16,527 | 35.6 |

The survey questionnaire also included a question on the content or scope of each State's program in performance-based education. This question was applicable only to those States reporting PBE activity on the first question. The results show that the plans and programs of the 29 States with PBE activities included a wide range of program aspects.

The two aspects most often reported were "new or revised programs and/or courses," and "multiple opportunities to pass a required test of competence," each occurring in 24 State programs. About 75 percent of the 29 States with PBE activity indicated that their programs in performance-based education required or involved the following four additional items:

- New proficiency tests for high school graduation (22 States)
- Out-of-school learning opportunities (22 States)
- Local options in determining performance standards or criteria (22 States)
- Production and use of research information to assist administrators, legislators, and courts in formulating performance-based education decisions (21 States).

In contrast, only five States reported that "new proficiency tests for high school entrance" were included in their programs. Another relatively rare occurrence was "new performance-based standards for teachers" (11 States).

Table 3 shows the totals and percentages of States with PBE activities for each program aspect.

Table 3.--Extent of inclusion of program aspects in Statewide performance-based education (PBE) plans or programs: 50 States and District of Columbia, August 1976

| Program aspect (in order of appearance on form) | Number and percent of the 29 States reporting some PBE activity | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Including aspect | | Not including aspect | | No response | |
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| New promotion or graduation standards that are performance-based rather than course- or time-based | 25 | 86 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 7 |
| New proficiency tests for high school entrance | 5 | 17 | 19 | 66 | 5 | 17 |
| New proficiency tests for high school graduation | 22 | 76 | 5 | 17 | 2 | 7 |
| Provision for "early exit" from high school | 20 | 69 | 7 | 24 | 2 | 7 |
| New or revised programs and/or courses | 24 | 83 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 7 |
| Multiple opportunities to pass a required test of competence | 24 | 83 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 7 |
| Out-of-school learning opportunities | 22 | 76 | 5 | 17 | 2 | 7 |
| New performance-based standards for teachers | 11 | 38 | 15 | 52 | 3 | 10 |
| Provision of State resources for local program implementation | 16 | 55 | 8 | 28 | 5 | 17 |
| Local options in determining performance standards or criteria | 22 | 76 | 4 | 14 | 3 | 10 |
| Production and use of research information | 21 | 72 | 6 | 21 | 2 | 7 |

The third topic of investigation for this survey concerned the perceived need for further research and development for selected aspects of PBE. The topics receiving the highest expressions of urgent need were:

- Production and use of research information to assist administrators, legislators, and courts in formulating performance-based education decisions (26 States)
- Local options in determining performance standards or criteria (25 States)
- Out-of-school learning opportunities (24 States)

The program aspect regarded as least needing research was "new proficiency tests for high school entrance." The totals for each program aspect are shown on the questionnaire in appendix II.

Several States identified an urgent perceived need for further research and development for a topic not listed on the questionnaire, these topics were:

- Pilot testing of competencies
- Alternatives for measuring competencies
- Identification of minimal competencies
- A method of accurately delineating a continuum where a student is developing mentally and helping him/her to see this in an acceptable but realistic light

The perceived need for further research and development of specific program aspects logically would vary according to whether a State was conducting activities in PBE. This was indeed a finding of this survey. Table 4 indicates that States with PBE activities were more likely to report an urgent need for further research and development than were States with no PBE activity.

Note that 18 States with PBE activity listed "new proficiency tests for high school graduation" as an urgent need, compared with 4 with no PBE plans or programs.

Table 4.--Perceived need for further research and development according to current status of State program in performance-based education (PBE): 50 States and District of Columbia, August 1976

| Program aspect (in order of appearance on form) | States reporting PBE activity (29 States) | | | | States reporting no PBE activity (22 States) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Urgent | Desirable | Not needed | No response | Urgent | Desirable | Not needed | No response |
| New promotion or graduation standards that are performance-based rather than course- or time-based | 15 | 13 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 14 | 1 | 0 |
| New proficiency tests for high school entrance | 2 | 7 | 19 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 9 | 0 |
| New proficiency tests for high school graduation | 18 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 12 | 6 | 0 |
| Provision for "early exit" from high school | 7 | 17 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 4 | 0 |
| New or revised programs and/or courses | 12 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 14 | 1 | 0 |
| Multiple opportunities to pass a required test of competence | 14 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 12 | 3 | 0 |
| Out-of-school learning opportunities | 16 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| New performance-based standards for teachers | 9 | 13 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 14 | 1 | 0 |
| Provision of State resources for local program implementation | 11 | 12 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 13 | 2 | 1 |
| Local options in determining performance standards or criteria | 15 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Production and use of research information | 16 | 9 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 10 | 2 | 0 |

## CONCLUSIONS

The concept of Statewide education programs involving performance-based criteria is receiving widespread attention, now extending to 28 States and the District of Columbia. There is some indication that the development of PBE programs has an "urban" flavor. Of the 15 most heavily populated States, 12 are moving in the direction of PBE. Furthermore, the 29 States with PBE plans or programs enroll two-thirds of our Nation's public elementary and secondary school students.

Most State PBE programs are still in the planning phase. Yet even at this early stage of development, the States reporting operational programs account for a fourth of the Nation's public school enrollment. Regardless of the status of PBE programs, respondents from a substantial majority of the States indicated that the development and implementation of PBE programs call for considerable supportive research and development.

The interest in performance-based standards and programs can be interpreted as a concern about defining the goals or objectives of education, developing effective educational processes to attain these goals, and identifying appropriate methods to measure such attainment.

## APPENDIX I

### The Fast Response Survey System

The Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) was established by NCES for the speedy collection of data needed to deal with important educational issues. The system is intended to collect information that is not available from other sources and that is narrowly limited in scope.

The FRSS has the cabability of covering six educational sectors. They are:

State education agencies (SEA's)

Local education agencies (LEA's)

Public elementary and secondary schools

Nonpublic elementary and secondary schools

Institutions of higher education

Noncollegiate postsecondary schools with occupational programs

For each sector except the SEA's, a stratified random sample has been designed to allow valid national estimates to be made. The sample sizes range from 500 to 1,000. All 51 SEA's are canvassed.

A data collection network, involving both responders and coordinators, has been developed in each sector. The coordinators' role is to assist in the data collection by maintaining liaison with the sampled institutions or agencies. The responders have been selected to represent their institutions or agencies and are responsible for completing the questionnaires.

The FRSS is designed to collect and analyze small amounts of data within short time periods, probably ranging from 6 to 10 weeks. Each survey has few questions, to encourage quick response with minimum burden. The number of questions is typically three to five.

The main objective of the Fast Response Survey System is to provide NCES with a mechanism for furnishing data quickly and with minimum effort. All aspects of the system--the sample design, the network of coordinators and responders, and the short questionnaires--have been designed for that purpose.

### Methodology for the SEA Survey of Developments in Performance-Based Education

The SEA survey of developments in performance-based education was conducted in August 1976. A 100-percent response rate was obtained from the 50 States and the District of Columbia. Each SEA coordinator was mailed a copy of the questionnaire for response by telephone.

The data base for the public elementary and secondary school student populations used in this report is the Fall 1975 Market Data Retrieval Combined Mail File. The student population figures include the 50 States and the District of Columbia. These figures represent an accumulation of enrollment data from LEA-controlled, county-controlled, and State-controlled schools. The data also conform to the following definitions of elementary, secondary, and combined schools:

Elementary - schools having no grades higher than eight, and at least one grade at level six or lower

Secondary - schools having only grades 7 or higher, with no grade higher than 12

Combined - all others.

## APPENDIX II

## SURVEY FORM WITH NATIONAL TOTALS

Fast Response Survey System

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
EDUCATION DIVISION
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

FORM APPROVED
OMB NO. 51-R1191

Dear FRSS State Coordinator:

There is a growing interest throughout the educational community in the concept of performance-based education, involving standards for measuring evidence of student achievement, or standards of "competency." The criteria may include minimum standards in the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics and in the life skills, that is, the demonstrable capabilities to complete tasks faced in adult life, such as filling out a job application or keeping a checkbook. The following questions, jointly sponsored by NCES and NIE, are designed to provide a nationwide, State-by-State overview of the current status of efforts to develop and implement basic skills and/or life skills standards and programs, and to highlight areas in which research and development are needed.

This survey has been coordinated with the Fast Response Panel of the CEIS Data Acquisition Subcommittee. Please complete the questionnaire below. You need not return the questionnaire. A representative of the NCES contractor (WESTAT, Inc.) will telephone you on to record your responses. If you have any questions, or if you wish to telephone your responses early, please contact Ed Krintz at 301-881-5310.

Sincerely yours,

Marie D. Eldridge

Marie D. Eldridge, Administrator
National Center for Education Statistics

### SEA SURVEY OF DEVELOPMENTS IN PERFORMANCE-BASED EDUCATION

This report is authorized by law (20 U.S.C. 1221 e-1). While you are not required to respond, your cooperation is needed to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate and timely.

1. IN YOUR STATE, WHAT IS THE STATUS OF STATEWIDE STANDARDS AND/OR CRITERIA FOR PERFORMANCE-BASED PROMOTION OR GRADUATION FROM ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS? (Check one box in each row.)

| SKILLS | IN PLANNING | DEVELOPED BUT NOT IMPLEMENTED | OPERATIONAL | NO PLANS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. BASIC | 23 | 1 | 5 | 22 |
| B. LIFE | 18 | 2 | 4 | 27 |

If you checked "NO PLANS" for both basic skills and life skills in question 1, then skip question 2 and go directly to question 3. Otherwise, answer both questions 2 and 3.

2. DOES THE FORMULATION OF THE STATE PROGRAM FOR PERFORMANCE-BASED EDUCATION REQUIRE OR INVOLVE ANY OF THE ITEMS IN THE LIST BELOW? (Check your responses under the column labeled "QUESTION 2.")

3. IN YOUR OPINION, HOW IMPORTANT IS THE NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOR EACH ITEM IN THE LIST BELOW? (Check one category for each item in the column labeled "QUESTION 3.")

| QUESTION 2 | | ITEMS | QUESTION 3 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| YES | NO | | URGENT NEED | DESIRABLE | NOT NEEDED |
| 25 | 2 | A. NEW PROMOTION OR GRADUATION STANDARDS THAT ARE PERFORMANCE-BASED RATHER THAN COURSE- OR TIME-BASED | 22 | 27 | 1 |
| 5 | 19 | B. NEW PROFICIENCY TESTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE | 3 | 19 | 28 |
| 22 | 5 | C. NEW PROFICIENCY TESTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION | 22 | 18 | 9 |
| 20 | 7 | D. PROVISIONS FOR "EARLY EXIT" FROM HIGH SCHOOL | 10 | 32 | 6 |
| 24 | 3 | E. NEW OR REVISED PROGRAMS AND/OR COURSES | 19 | 24 | 5 |
| 24 | 3 | F. MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO PASS A REQUIRED TEST OF COMPETENCE | 21 | 21 | 6 |
| 22 | 5 | G. OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES | 24 | 22 | 3 |
| 11 | 15 | H. NEW PERFORMANCE-BASED STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS | 16 | 27 | 5 |
| 16 | 8 | I. PROVISION OF STATE RESOURCES FOR LOCAL PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION | 17 | 25 | 5 |
| 22 | 4 | J. LOCAL OPTIONS IN DETERMINING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS OR CRITERIA | 25 | 19 | 4 |
| 21 | 6 | K. PRODUCTION AND USE OF RESEARCH INFORMATION TO ASSIST ADMINISTRATORS, LEGISLATORS, AND COURTS IN FORMULATING PERFORMANCE-BASED EDUCATION DECISIONS | 26 | 19 | 3 |
| 3 | 1 | L. OTHER (specify) | 4 | 1 | 0 |

NCES FORM 2370-1, 7/78